

278 cure the symptoms, and whether for that reason and its psychological
 757 effect or because of a truly curative value, men have great faith in the
 755 medicines. There are undoubtedly ingredients in Lovedu medicines
 which cannot be empirically related to either symptom or cure, since they
 operate mainly by a technique of analogies which we relegate to the
 magical world. Such are animal products like hair, skin, excrement, and
 ovaries used in a variety of ways—for instance, for barrenness and indig-
 estion; minerals like ironstone used for strengthening babies; and sea
 or river products, sand and shells, indispensable for keeping witches out
 of the village. But to Lovedu men and women the use of such ingredients
 in no way differs from the use of a herb: both are thought to have curative
 value and for them our distinction between magical and scientific treat-
 ments, between cause and effect and false analogy, does not exist. Just
 as a herb may have properties for curing disease, so, for example, the
 backbone of a python is effective in curing general debility or backache.
 The bone is pounded and the powder inoculated into scarifications along
 the back, by which means the immense power of the python is thus
 imparted to the patient. But note the sequel. So powerful is this medicine
 that the patient, when his time has come, will have difficulty in dying.
 His eyes will remain alive though the body is dead until once more the
 python powder is applied by being burned under his nose that he may
 inhale the smoke. This strengthening and the reversal of its influence are
 like injection and desensitization in our medical practice.

- 759 When we pursue Lovedu conceptions as regards the nursing and treat-
 ment of patients, we have once more to regard them from their
 [515 point of view. Cleanliness and hygiene are very remotely related to health.
 777] Flies are freely tolerated because it is unlucky to kill them, not because,
 as is held in some other tribes, abundance of flies means riches in cattle.
 Invalids are not given a special diet, so that instructions by European
 doctors that a mother should feed her ailing baby on vitamin-containing
 foods or fruits are ignored unless medicine is given to be mixed with the
 food. It is equally fatal to appeal to the curative powers of nature: an
 invalid will impute unwillingness to help, ignorance or even sinister
 designs, if you tell him that nature will heal him and give no medicine.
 It is medicine and medicine alone that is thought to heal. But even
 medicine is never allowed much time in which to do its curative work.
 If one drug is not effective within a week it will be changed for another.
 Often a number of medicines are used at the same time, so that if one is
 ineffectual the other may heal. In every case we attended we found
 Native treatment was being given at the same time as, and often to the
 detriment of, our own. Nor would our protests be of any avail. Even in
 hospitals there are secret chewings of herbs and surreptitious steam-
 ings. Though it is admitted that certain medicines may not 'agree' when
 used together, use of the wrong medicine is not thought to have any
 harmful effects. At the most, a medicine merely does not heal; it never
 definitely harms the patient. Inexactness in the quantity of medicine
 taken is accompanied by a laxity in the carrying out of doctors' instruc-
 tions which, though of no consequence where Native medicines are
 used, may do immense harm if the medicines are European. A careful

comparison between the instructions of Native doctors at consultations and the actual manner in which these were carried out showed great discrepancies between the two. There are certain general principles known to all and on the whole people trust to their knowledge of these and the powers of the medicines themselves rather than slavishly following instructions. 758 ●

The sick like to be in the open or in the sun, but it is for comfort and warmth, not because the curative power of nature or the need for nursing is recognized. An invalid generally spends the day lying wrapped up in his blanket in or near the courtyard or in the sheltered storage enclosure. This open-air sick-room, sunny or shady as the needs of the body dictate and protected from wind, is, in the absence of light, well-ventilated rooms, the best possible place for the health of the patient. At night, however, or when the patient is too ill to move, the sick-room is the kitchen hut, where the evening meal is cooked, and it is generally foul with smoke and full of people. A patient suffering from a bad cough is given a potsherd of sand to spit into. If at all possible, a patient goes outside to relieve himself, but if he is too weak to walk a broken pot is provided as a commode. Very sick people are given soft porridge without meat or relish, and great pains are taken to persuade patients to eat lest they lose strength and waste away. The treatment in diseases such as smallpox, measles, 757 and chickenpox, which one generally gets once only, is peculiar and shows how values and procedures used in other spheres of culture may become interwoven with medical practices. The illness is dealt with as if it were a stage in life like puberty or circumcision. When the first symptoms appear, the patient is isolated and a stick, placed across the hut door, warns people off, for *muridi* (shadow) will aggravate the illness if the patient comes into contact with certain people. After some days, when the rash has disappeared or the pustules no longer contain white matter, he is smeared with fat and ochre, whether he feels better or not, and allowed out. The treatment is called *hu tba*, the term used for going through the circumcision initiation. But there is another aspect of the treatment. The pox pustules are scraped daily with soaked bark of *mutscra* (*Bridelia* sp.), the purpose as phrased being to cause the white matter to come out and to prevent the pustules from going deeply into the endodermis, thus leaving pock marks.

'Transition' diseases, as we may call those dealt with upon the pattern 753 of *hu tba*, lead us to consider some general conceptions underlying Lovedu medical practice and causation of disease. These conceptions remind us of the Greek theory of humours which long dominated European medicine and were at the basis of mediaeval physiology. Physical and mental qualities and dispositions were attributed to the four chief fluids or cardinal humours of the body, viz. blood, phlegm, choler, and melancholy or black choler. Choler, probably derived from the Greek word for bile and from which we get our word 'cholera', was, for instance, the humour causing irascibility of temper. The Lovedu attach less importance to temperament and have based their cardinal categories, not upon physiological fluids, but upon conceptions associated with shadow (*muridi*), mingling (*makhuma*), heat (*hu fesa*), and sex. These do not

783 not a real or mystical shadow in our sense of the term, but an evil and contagious force conceptualized, on the analogy of a shadow, as an invisible counterpart of certain conditions. The sources of 'shadow' are such conditions or events as death, activities connected with human reproduction, including sex intercourse, the early stages of pregnancy, birth of twins, miscarriage (regarded as death), women during confinement, irregular appearance of the teeth, e.g. upper incisor before lower or molar before incisor. 'Shadow' is accordingly connected with many of the same kind of irregularities as generate 'heat', but it appears to be differentiated as an independent concept for the purpose of dealing with its effects on the health of people who are peculiarly susceptible to defilement.

783 Precautions are taken to protect the sick against the influence of *muridi*. A sick person is smeared with medicines or quarantined like a new-born child by means of a medicated stick placed across the entrance to his hut to warn off carriers of 'shadow' and counteract the 'shadow' of anyone unaware of his condition. If there is an epidemic in a village and the general vitality and resistance consequently are lowered, people may be told to refrain from sex intercourse lest *muridi* make the illness worse. In the smallpox epidemic of 1938 people cohabiting were said to have the disease in a worse form than others. When a child is ill, its parents refrain from sex intercourse. A warrior who slept with his wife the night before battle would be easy prey to the enemy. A man sleeping with his wife may not approach a slaughtered animal before its stomach has been pierced nor help skin it without first smearing his hands with (usually cooling) medicine, lest *muridi* affect the meat and cause stomach trouble (*makhuma*) to those eating it. [826] Children whose teeth appear irregularly (*leshega*) are full of *muridi* and were killed in the old days. But today they are treated by a doctor and have to be careful never to bite others, for the wound will not heal and there is always difficulty in obtaining the necessary antidote, namely, scrapings from the teeth of the *leshega*. Cross-roads and river fords are secondary sources of *muridi* since the 'shadow' carried by unsuspecting hosts infects these places. For this reason pregnant women are not supposed to go on long journeys from home. [843]

783 *Muridi* is a much more limited concept than 'heat'; it is invoked mainly to account for the aggravation of illness or the susceptibility to illness or other injury of persons contacting defilement. It does not affect the country generally, and it furnishes an alternative to witchcraft as an explanation of the aggravation of ailments or the failure of illnesses to yield to ordinary remedies.

Muridi in a more virulent form is called *leridi* (ominous or menacing shadow), which infects a warrior who has killed an enemy and who is in grave danger of becoming mad or very quarrelsome unless purified. An allied concept is that of *letala* (sinister track) derived from the idea that, if a woman is cohabiting with two men one of whom gets ill, the track of the other, should he approach near or within earshot of the sick person, will